persons were poor and landless. It would be a great boon to these poor people if some Sirkar reserve was set apart for assignment to them and the land was registered to them on concessional rates of *taravila* in small blocks of 10 cents each.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Appavu Vaidyan, I was not aware that the Vilakkitalavanmars were agriculturists. I think I am correct in saying that they follow one or two definite professions or occupations. So all that they need is not land to cultivate but land for house-sites. You say that there are 27,000 Vilakkitalavanmars not owning land. It would therefore be a very serious problem to provide them with 10 cents of land each, that is 2,70,000 cents of land or 2,700 acres. Where such land is to be found—I am afraid it is difficult to point out. And if we, as you suggest, have vacated a reserve somewhere and register the whole of that to Vilakkitalavanmars, it will mean that all of them will be located in one place so as to render the practice of their profession impossible. However, the matter will be reviewed and I shall instruct the Land Revenue Commissioner to go carefully into the matter and see whether anything possible can be done to assist your community in the matter. I would suggest that you take an early opportunity of interviewing the Land Revenue Commissioner and furnishing him with such details and such particulars as he will need.

9. Difficulties in the registry of Puduval lands in the names of members of the depressed classes.

MR. N. JOHN JOSEPH (*Member, Nominated*) said that according to the statements made by Government 16,026 acres of land had been set apart in all the taluks together for registry to the depressed classes. But most of the lands set apart were extremely poor and unfit for cultivation. The few lands that were useful were those in the occupation of other communities from whom the depressed classes could not recover them. Complaints had been preferred in respect of several such lands and the delay in the disposal of these complaints tended to strengthen the claims of the occupants. The lands that were actually registered to the depressed classes were in their possession and enjoyment. But somehow the impression had got abroad that the owners of these lands were freely alienating them for trifling considerations. This was not correct. Such alienations, if at all, were procured by the fraud and ill-will of the Proverthicars and of the persons belonging to other communities.

Another respect in which the depressed classes were ill-treated by the Revenue officers was in the interpretation and application of the rules regarding concessional registry. These rules were often interpreted to mean that the depressed classes were disqualified to get registry of any lands except those earmarked for concessional registry to them. Cases were not rare in which land holders belonging to the depressed classes were forcibly evicted from lands in their occupation and enjoyment for no better reason than that the lands did not come within the ear-marked area. It was imperative that this pernicious practice should be put a stop to by Government.

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Special consideration had to be shown in the matter of registry of lands to the depressed classes inhabiting the taluks of Ambalapuzha and Sherthallai and the western parts of the taluks of Kottayam, Vaikom, Changanachery, Tiruvalla, Karthikapalli and Karunagapalli.

The fuel reserves from which wood had been cleared could be utilised for assignment to the depressed classes. So also the swampy areas lying in forest regions, some of the fodder reserves, and portions of other reserves. In order to select suitable lands from these areas and to register them to the depressed classes, a committee might be appointed consisting of the Land-revenue Commissioner, the Dewan Peishkars, the Conservator of Forests, the Protector of the Depressed Classes and representatives of the depressed classes.

With a view to helping the depressed classes living in towns, Government should acquire lands, if necessary, under the Land Acquisition Regulation, the compensation paid being recovered in six or seven annual instalments from the persons to whom the lands were assigned.

The proposal which Government had under consideration to assign *puduval* lands on lease instead of on permanent registry to the depressed classes with a view to preventing the alienation of these lands was unwise and uncalled for. In the first place, as had already been pointed out, these lands were never intentionally alienated. Secondly the proposal, if given effect to, will for ever operate to the disadvantage of the depressed classes, denying to them the privilege of ownership of lands and all the attendant civic rights such as franchise for the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, which at least for the present depended on property qualifications. What was required was therefore to enforce with greater rigour the order already issued prohibiting alienation of registered lands. The member proposed to submit to Government a full memorandum containing all the facts bearing on this question and it would be very proper, he said, if Government waited at least till then to take any steps in the matter.

In so far as the Protector of the Depressed Classes was concerned, the appointment of a European officer would meet the wishes of the people. If that was not feasible, the appointment of a Brahmin officer well-acquainted with revenue work would be desirable.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Joseph, there is a good deal in what you say, that the utmost is not as yet being done in establishing the landless and depressed classes on the land. The intention on the part of Government is with you; and the Heads of Departments concerned are doing their level best also to help to settle these poor people on the land. But there are practical difficulties. Great caution is necessary. I hope that these defects will to a large extent be minimised by appointing a whole time Protector of Depressed Classes. I trust that by next year, or year after the next, when you come before this Assembly, you will see that there has been a very marked, a very striking improvement in this direction.

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